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## Phonological, Lexical, Structural, and Semantic Aspects of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*: A Diachronic Study

### I. Introduction

When Shakespeare wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* in about 1606, he was not probably aware that he was communicating to the twenty-first century reader more meanings than he ever wanted; nor was he probably conscious that he was addressing an audience much larger than he thought. His play is fascinating in more ways than one. Not only does it capture Antony's excessive fascination with Cleopatra's Egypt and the ensuing conflict he experiences between his deep love for the Egyptian charming queen and his duty as a political and military commander, but it also captures the linguistic state of affairs prevalent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Taken as a linguistic document, the play reflects the way the English language was in Shakespeare's time. The phonological, lexical, structural, and semantic features of Elizabethan English are but some of the linguistic implications that Shakespeare unconsciously conveys in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Though belonging to Modern English, *Antony and Cleopatra* displays linguistic features that mark major differences between Elizabethan English and the English spoken and written today. The differences, however, appear to be much less dramatic than those between Shakespeare's English and Chaucer's. While this paper is concerned with the evolution Modern English has undergone over the past four hundred years, it will rule out substandard varieties of English.

Although the language of *Antony and Cleopatra* is poetic, written mostly in iambic pentameter, it can still lend itself to comparison with present-day English in many respects. The analysis below will point out differences between Elizabethan English and the English spoken and

written today in the areas of pronunciation, the use of nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives, the way words were inflected and structured, and the way some of Shakespeare's words came to acquire new meanings in the course of four hundred years.

## II. Phonological features

In the absence of phonograph records and tape recordings, it is no easy task to reconstruct Elizabethan English pronunciation and find out how similar or dissimilar it is to present-day English pronunciation. Fortunately, written records provide some important clues as to how words were pronounced in the sixteenth century and earlier. Among the best clues to Elizabethan English pronunciation are spelling conventions, rhymes, and puns in the literary works of the time, notably Shakespeare's. Such clues indicate that Shakespeare's pronunciation differed from present-day pronunciation in some respects. For example, some rhymes and puns indicate that vowel sounds represented by the *ea* spelling were pronounced [e], and not [i] as in current pronunciation.<sup>1</sup> A rhyme occurring in *Antony and Cleopatra* shows that Shakespeare pronounced *fear* as *fair*, as evident in Charmian's advice to Cleopatra not to provoke Antony too far:

Tempt him not so too far. I wish, forbear,  
In time we hate that which we often fear. (I.iii.12)

A similar rhyme is found in the opening scene of *Macbeth*, where the word *heath* rhymes with *Macbeth*, which suggests that the word was pronounced [he:θ] in Elizabethan English, and not [hi:θ] as it is pronounced today. The witches ask:

FIRST WITCH    Where the place?  
SECOND        Upon the heath.  
WITCH  
THIRD WITCH   There to meet with Macbeth. (*Macbeth*, I.i.7)

A pun on the words *reason* and *raisin* in *Henry IV, Part I* leads to the same conclusion. In Falstaff's statement, "If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion," reasons and raisin are homophones.

The [e:] sound represented by the *ea* spelling continued to be pronounced [e:] in the eighteenth century, as evident in the poetry of Pope, where *tea* rhymes with *obey*:

Here thou, great Ana! Whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take – and sometimes Tea. (The  
Rape of the Lock).

Thus, one can infer that in Antony's utterance to Pompey: "We'll speak with thee at sea" (II.vi.25), the words *speak* and *sea* sound as [spek] and [se].

The change of [e:] into modern [i:] is best understood as part of a gradual and systematic series of changes that affected all long vowels between the fifteenth and eighteenth century. Known as the Great Vowel Shift (GVS), the movement involved vowel raising and diphthongization of high vowels. Over the years during this period the long vowels came to be pronounced with a greater elevation of the tongue and closing of the mouth while those which could not be raised any more such as [i:] and [u:] were transformed into the diphthongs [ay] and [aw] respectively. Yule (1985) humorously depicts some of these changes: "Chaucer lived in what would have sounded like a 'hoos', with his 'weef', and 'hay' would romance 'heer' with a bottle of 'weena', drunk by the light of the 'moan'" (p.174).

With GVS accomplished, Chaucer's Middle English long vowel [i:] became Modern English [ay], [e:] became [i:], [ɛ:] became [e:], [a:] became [e:], [ɔ:] became [o:], [o:] became [u:], and [u:] became [aw].

GVS marks the last major barrier between early English and the present-day standard English (Crystal, 1990). Once complete, there seemed to be a lull in linguistic change. While sounds continued to change they did so with a much slower pace.

The pronunciation of *tea* as [te] in Pope's poetry shows that by Shakespeare's time some phonological changes had already been accomplished while others were still underway but not complete. Among the changes that had already been accomplished was the transformation of Chaucer's Middle English long vowels [e:] into [i:], [a:] into [e:], [ɔ:] into [u:]; [ɛ:] into [e:], and [ɔ:] into [o:]. The change of the old value [ɛ:] into Modern English [i:] was still underway, and the vowel was pronounced by Shakespeare as [e:].<sup>2</sup> Also, the evolution of [i:] into [ay], and [u:] into [aw] may not have been fully attained in Shakespeare's day, but was apparently well on the way (Baugh and Cable, 1993). It is quite likely that in the heroic couplet below, the phrase "our lives" sounded like [u:r li:vz]:

Be't as our gods will have't! It only stands  
Our lives upon to use our strongest hands. (II.i.51)

While the gulf between Chaucer's and Shakespeare's pronunciation is unmistakable, the gap between Shakespeare's and current pronunciation

is not all that wide. By Shakespeare's time, most of the long vowel sounds had acquired approximately their present pronunciation. The only exceptions were the Middle English [ɛ:] which became [e:] as still heard in the vowel sounds of *break*, *great* and *steak*,<sup>3</sup> (which survived as an exception), and the high vowels [i:] and [u:] which were transformed respectively into [ay] and [aw] either fully after Shakespeare or in part during his day. The change of Shakespeare's [e:] in words like *clean* [kle:n] into [i:] as in the present pronunciation [kli:n] took place at the end of the seventeenth century and had become general by the middle of the eighteenth (Baugh and Cable, 1993).

There is also evidence that in Shakespeare's time the vowel represented with the *oo* spelling was pronounced [o] as in the current pronunciation of *brooch* [broʊtʃ] which retains its old vowel sound. The word *room* was pronounced [rom], as indicated by Cassius' pun in *Julius Caesar*, in which *room* sounds like *Rome*:

Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,  
When there is in it but one only man. (*Julius Caesar*,  
I.ii.157)

By analogy, [rom] is the pronunciation of *room* in Scarus' speech in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

We'll beat 'em into bench-holes: I have yet  
Room for six scotches more. (IV.vii.15)

Cassius' Rome-room pun suggests that the fifteenth-century value [o:] had not, by Shakespeare's time, changed yet into [u:] in words containing the Middle English vowel  $\bar{o}$ . It is possible, however, that the older [o:] was retained in some words containing  $\bar{o}$  such as *room*, but replaced in others with the sound [u:] which has remained in current pronunciation in words like *moon*, *roof*, and *food*. In some other words it was shortened and rounded to [ʌ] as in *flood*. The fact that a phonological change can affect some words, and not others, at a particular point of time is not particularly controversial. When phonological changes occur they do not affect all words at once, but as Aitchison (1992) remarks, rather move across the language from one word to another "like apples on a tree, which ripen around the same time, but not simultaneously" (p.139). Thus when Enobarbus describes Cleopatra's barge, it is not clear whether the word *poop* in "the poop was beaten gold" (II.ii.95) was pronounced with the fifteenth-century value [po:p] or with the evolved value [pu:p] that has survived since.

Shakespeare's short vowel sounds in stressed syllables did not seem to change much from Chaucer's. The only exceptions were the sounds represented by the Middle English *a* and *u*. By the end of the sixteenth century Chaucer's *a* came to be pronounced [æ] as in *cat* and *u* became [ʌ] as in *hut*. Chaucer pronounced *u* [U] as in *full*, but by Shakespeare's time the [U] had evolved into [ʌ], and has remained as such ever since, except after labials as in *full*, *put*, *wood*, *bull* (Lehmann, 1992).

Another Aspect of Shakespeare's pronunciation was the pronunciation of [r] wherever it occurred. The disappearance of the [r] before consonants and in final position was a phonological addition that did not exist before the year 1607 (Fromkin and Rodman, 1983). Wherever spelled, the [r] was pronounced by the colonial settlers of America and by their countrymen who remained in England. Thus *farm*, *mother*, and *march* were pronounced in both England and America as [farm], [mʌðər], and [marč] respectively. But between 1607 and 1900 the grammar of British English and the grammars of the English spoken by the American settlers in Boston underwent an interesting change, namely the addition of a phonological rule stipulating that the [r] must be pronounced only when it occurs before a vowel. This rule was not added to the grammars of many other Americans (p.285). The loss of the *r* in the aforementioned grammars also affected the preceding vowel: "From texts over several centuries, we know that in standard British English the syllable-final *r*, as in *year*, has been lost, with lengthening of the preceding vowel" (Lehmann, 1992, p.3). The loss of *r* and the flat *a* in words like *fast*, *path*, *etc*, which were preserved in General American, took place in southern England at the end of the eighteenth century (Baugh and Cable, 1993, p. 354). Thus, in the dialog below, the [r] is pronounced in the words *billiards*, *Charmian*, *arm*, *sore*, *Mardian*, *sir*, *short*, *actor* and *pardon*, where they would be dropped in current standard British pronunciation:

CLEOPATRA Let it alone, let's to billiards: come, Charmian.  
 CHARMIAN My arm is sore; best play with Mardian.  
 CLEOPATRA As well a woman with an eunuch played  
 As with a woman. Come. You'll play with me, sir?  
 MARDIAN As well as I can, madam.  
 CLEOPATRA And when good will is showed, though't come too  
 short,  
 The actor may plead pardon. I'll none now. (II.v.9)

The use of the indefinite article *an* before *eunuch* in the quotation above indicates that the word was pronounced without the initial palatal glide [y] as in today's pronunciation. The use of the same indefinite determiner before *one* also shows that Shakespeare did not pronounce *one* with a

labiovelar glide as it is the case today [wʌn], but like *own* [on]. This is evident in the attendant's reply to Antony's request: "The man from Sycon! Is there such an one?" (I.ii.105)

Further, Shakespeare's pronunciation of the vowel sound in *sir* in the above quotation is not the same as today's pronunciation. Nor is it similar to that in *serve* or to that in *purple* in the soothsayer's prediction: "You shall outlive the lady whom you serve" (I.ii.29), and in Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra's barge "Purple the sails" (II.ii.196). The difference in quality of the three vowel sounds in *sir*, *serve*, and *purple* is attributed to the fact that the falling together of *er*, *ir*, and *ur* was not yet completed, though still underway (Baugh and Cable, 1993).

Shakespearean pronunciation is also different from current pronunciation with respect to accent. The iambic pentameter, with which *Antony and Cleopatra* is written, also contributes important clues as to the way some words were pronounced during Shakespeare's time. For example, the word *cement*, which is now pronounced with a stress on the second syllable, once had the stress on the first. This is shown in Caesar's iambic pentameter address to Antony below, where stressed syllables are underlined:

Let not the piece of virtue which is set  
Betwixt us, as the cement of our love (III. ii. 28)

The word occurs again with a stress on the first syllable in Pompey's speech:

For they have entertained cause enough  
To draw their swords: but how the fear of us  
May cement their divisions and bind up  
The petty difference, we yet not know (II.i.49)

Other words such as *aspect* used to be pronounced with the stress on the second syllable, as seen in Cleopatra's talk about Pompey, "There would he anchor his aspect and die" (I.v.33).

Phonological changes were not the only changes that Modern English has undergone over the past four centuries. Other changes were taking place in the areas of vocabulary and grammar, and these will be explored below.

### III. Noun Inflections

A close reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* reveals interesting facts about noun inflections. Some noun inflections were still evolving while others were almost established and have survived without noticeable changes. Among these is the plural *-s* inflection in present-day English, which remains almost the same as that used in *Antony and Cleopatra*, with *-s* being added to the noun to form the plural. By the time Shakespeare wrote the play, the plural inflection had changed from the Old English plural system, where the plural of *boc* (book), for instance, was *bec*, and that of *broc* (breech) was *brec*. In Shakespeare's time, the plural *-s* ending was commonly used. There were, however, some exceptions which have survived as "irregularities" in today's plural. These include nouns with unchanged plurals such as *sheep* and *swine*, and nouns whose plural is formed with vowel mutation rather than an ending, such as *foot feet*, *tooth teeth*, *goose geese*, *man men*, *mouse mice*, *woman women*, *louse lice*. However, there is evidence in *Antony and Cleopatra* of certain survivals of the old weak plural *-n*, such as *eyne*, which occurs in the song:

*Come, thou monarch of the vine,  
Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!* (II.vii.107)

Other words such as *foe*, *knee*, *flea*, *hose*, and *shoe*, had their plurals *fon*, *kneen*, *fleen*, *hosen*, and *shoon* respectively. The only survivals can be seen in the plural of *ox* as *oxen*, the poetical word *kine* and mixed plurals like *children* and *brethren* (Baugh and Cable, 1993). The plural of these words has not survived but has instead conformed to the regular *-s* pattern, thus becoming *eyes*, *foes*, *knees*, and *fleas*, respectively. In other cases, old plural forms were used interchangeably with the new *-s* endings.

Some difference can also be seen in the dual treatment of particular nouns. Whereas the word *news*, for example, is always treated as singular today, it was treated in Elizabethan English as both singular and plural. This is evident in the opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*. When an attendant brings news from Rome, Antony expresses his irritation with the remark "Grates me, the sum" (I.i.18), where the *-s* ending with the verb *grate* shows that the word was treated as singular. But when Cleopatra objects by saying, "Nay, hear them Antony" (I.i.19), she gives evidence that the word could also be treated as plural.

Another noun inflection which has remained unchanged since *Antony and Cleopatra* is the genitive *s*, though, as Blake (1996) remarks, the double genitive was very common in Elizabethan English. The use of the double genitive in *Antony and Cleopatra* can be exemplified by Canidius' statement about Caesar: "This Speed of Caesar's carries beyond belief"

(III.vii.74). Like the plural inflection, the genitive had already taken place by the time the play was written. However, the genitive *s* seems to have been confused with what was thought to be a contraction of a noun and the pronoun *his*. The confusion can be traced back to the period of Middle English, when the unaccented *-es* of the genitive was frequently written and pronounced *-is*, *-ys*. The genitive morpheme thus came to sound like the pronoun *his* when it was pronounced without the initial *h* in unstressed environments. In this way, the pronunciation of *stonis* was the same as the pronunciation of *ston is (his)*. Baugh and Cable (1993) note that as early as the thirteenth century the ending was sometimes written separately as though the possessive case were a contraction of a noun and the pronoun *his*. This notion prevailed for a long time, and can be seen to have survived in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*,<sup>4</sup> when Antonio says:

I do not without danger walk these streets.  
Once, in a sea-fight, 'gainst the count his galleys  
I did some service. (*Twelfth Night*, III.iii.30)

Baugh and Cable (1993) point out that the notion continued to trouble people in the eighteenth century, as Dr. Johnson finds it hard to believe that the possessive ending is a contraction of *his* in such expressions as *a woman's beauty* or *a virgin's delicacy*. He, himself, seems to have been conscious that its true source was the Old English genitive, but the error has left its trace in the apostrophe, which is still retained as a graphic convenience to mark the possessive. The difference between Elizabethan English and present-day English in noun inflections is hardly noticeable. More salient, perhaps, is the difference in personal pronoun use.

#### IV. Pronouns

One of the main differences between present-day English and Elizabethan English is the use of personal pronouns. Three developments mark the use of the personal pronoun in the sixteenth century: the gradual transformation of the neuter genitive *his* into *it* and then *its*; the replacement of the forms *thou*, *thy*, and *thee* with the forms *you*, *your*, and *you* respectively, and the substitution of the nominative pronoun *ye* with *you*.

The gradual transformation of the neuter genitive *his* into *it* and *its* is one of the most interesting developments in the pronoun system. According to Blake (1996), the form of the possessive determiner *it* was rare, and *its* is an extension of the genitive ending *-s* to it. *It* (rather than *its*) is the possessive determiner used by Antony in his comic description of the crocodile: "It is shaped, sir, like itself; and it is as broad as it hath breadth.



It is just so high as it is, and moves with it own organs: it lives by that which nourisheth it; and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates" (II.vii.40).<sup>5</sup>

While the possessive determiner *its* was recorded at the end of the sixteenth century, its use did not become general until a century later, and it was spelled with an apostrophe until the end of the eighteenth century (Crystal, 1990, p. 201). The analogical form *it's* (now *its*) for the possessive of *it* was perhaps suggested by the possessive of nouns. Baugh and Cable (1993) point out that the first recorded instance of this form is in the Second Book of Madrigals, published by Nicholas Yonge in 1597. Because *it* does not occur in the Bible or any of Shakespeare's plays printed during his lifetime, the authors rule out the common use of *it's* even at the end of the sixteenth century. Only towards the end of the seventeenth century does the form *its* begin to have a rapid momentum:

Milton, although living until 1674, seems to have admitted it but grudgingly to his writings; there are only three occurrences of the word in all his poetry and not many in his prose. Yet so useful a word could hardly fail to win a place for itself among the rank and file of speakers. Towards the close of the seventeenth century its acceptance seems to have gained momentum rapidly, so that to Dryden (1631-1700) the older use of *his* as a neuter seemed an archaism worthy of comment. (p. 239)

In Antony's description of the crocodile above, *it* was used as a possessive determiner, thus giving evidence that the determiner was used with animate nonhuman entities. There is, however, other evidence in the play that such entities could be referred to with the possessive determiner *his*, and with the object pronoun *him*, as in the clown's answer to Cleopatra's request in which he refers to "the pretty worm of Nilus" with the pronouns *his* and *him*:

CLEOPATRA Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,  
That kills and pains not?

CLOWN Truly, I have him: but I would not be the party that  
should desire you to touch him, for his biting is  
immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or never  
recover. (V.ii.247)

The pronoun *his* was used with neuter objects as the proper genitive form,<sup>6</sup> as evident in Shakespeare's sonnet:

Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed.

The pronoun continued to be used until the middle of the seventeenth century, a fact attested by the biblical *If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?*

The possessive form *mine*, as used in Elizabethan English, is also different from modern use. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, *mine* occurs both as a possessive pronoun and a possessive adjective preceding vowels while *my* occurs as a possessive adjective before consonants and vowels. Today, possessive *mine* is used only as a pronoun. The use of *mine* and *my* is illustrated in Antony's speech in which he justifies why he did not provide Caesar with "arms and aid":

Neglected, rather;  
And then when poison'd hours had bound me up  
From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,  
I'll play the penitent to you: but mine honesty  
Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power  
Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,  
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;  
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do  
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour  
To stoop in such a case. (II.ii.102)

In the speech above *mine* is used as a possessive determiner before the words *own*, *honesty*, and *honour*, while *my* is used before the words *greatness* and *power*. Other instances illustrate the use of *mine* as a possessive determiner before vowels: Cleopatra, eager to learn about the speech of Antony, uses *mine* before *ear* in her dialog with the messenger, "Mine ear must pluck it thence" (I.v.42). Caesar's blame of Antony includes the phrase *mine intent* :

You may be pleased to catch at mine intent  
By what did here befall me. (II.ii.46)

And in Antony's justification of his position, the phrase "mine own peace" occurs. But he also uses the phrase "the article of my oath" where *my* precedes a vowel. Other instances of the use of *my* before a vowel can be seen in Antony's words:

The business she hath broached in the state  
Cannot endure my absence. (I.ii.160)

It can also be seen in Cleopatra's words "O, my oblivion is a very Antony" (I.iii.90), "Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly" (I.iii.99), and in her orders to Charmian to give her the sleep-inducing mandragora so that she "might sleep out this great gap of time

my Antony is away" (I.v.6). Before Eros commits suicide, he bids Antony farewell, addressing him as "my emperor" (IV.xiv.90).

Another aspect of difference between today's English and the English of *Antony and Cleopatra* with respect to personal pronouns is the use of the second person pronoun. In *Antony and Cleopatra* the forms *thou*, *thee*, *thy* and *thine* were used along with the modern forms *you*, *your*, and *yours*. However, the use of one form or another reflects the attitude of one speaker towards his/her addressee and the tenor of dramatic discourse. The *thou*-forms designate social proximity and are properly used in commands and friendly contexts, whereas the *you*-forms denote social distance, formality, and respect. In his introduction to *King Lear*, Lott (1974) points out that the *thou*-forms are used in addressing social inferiors, members of one's family in normal and cordial terms of relationship, and supernatural beings, as in most Christian prayers in modern English.<sup>7</sup>

In his introduction to *Hamlet* (1968), he points out that the *thou*-*you* finer distinction was wearing thin in Shakespeare's days, which justifies why some usages in *Hamlet* "can hardly be explained by reference to this pattern" (p. xlii).

The distinction was much more clear-cut in earlier English: *thou* was used for the singular and *you* for the plural second person. In the thirteenth century the singular forms (*thou*, *thy*, *thee*) were used among familiars and in addressing children or persons of inferior rank, while the plural forms (*ye*, *your*, *you*) began to be used as a mark of respect in addressing a superior. The usage continued to reflect social distance or proximity until *ye*, *your*, and *you* became the usual pronoun of direct address regardless rank and intimacy. The *thou*-form ceased to be in general use at the end of the seventeenth century, though it continued in some regional dialects and religious styles (Crystal, 1990, p. 201).

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, warm exchanges between Antony and Cleopatra are characterized by the use of *thou*-forms:

CLEOPATRA	I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.
MARK	Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new
ANTONY	earth. (I.i.17)

At no moment in the play is Cleopatra psychologically closer to Antony than when he dies. This proximity is revealed in part through the use of *thou*-forms:

Noblest of men, woo't die?  
Hast thou no care of me? Shall I abide  
In this dull world, which in thy absence is  
No better than a sty? (IV.xv.62)

Cleopatra's use of *thou*- or *you*-forms determines the psychological distance she is willing to maintain with Antony at particular points in the development of the drama. When messengers arrive from Rome with news for Antony, Cleopatra uses verbal strategies to ensure that Antony will brush aside the news and focus all his attention on her. Among the linguistic devices that mark her discourse with Antony is the use of the distant *you*-forms:

You must not stay here longer, your dismissal  
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony. (I.i.27)

But because this distance has to be within control, she discontinues the use of *you*-forms, and reverts, instead, to the warmer *thou*-forms, addressing him with his name:

Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,  
Thou blushest, Antony; and that blood of thine  
Is Caesar's homager: else so thy cheek pays shame  
When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds. The messengers! (I.i.32)

When she gets upset because Antony has to go, she provokes him, using *you*-forms:

What says the married woman? You may go:  
Would she had never given you leave to come!  
Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here.  
I have no power upon you; hers you are. (I.iii.23)

Another distinction marking the use of the second pronoun in *Antony and Cleopatra* is that between the objective *you* and the nominative *ye*. Such dichotomy does not exist in today's English. The form *ye* ceased to be used in the seventeenth century, and like the pronoun *thou*, indiscriminate use of the other form preceded its disappearance. Baugh and Cable (1993) point out that the two pronouns *you* and *ye* were at first nicely differentiated, but because both were unstressed in most times, they were often pronounced like *ye*. There was, however, a tendency to confuse the two forms at a fairly early stage. In the fourteenth century the accusative form *you* began to be used as a nominative, and in the fifteenth century

the nominative *ye* began to be used for the objective case. Since that time, the two forms have apparently been used pretty indiscriminately until *ye* finally disappeared. In the early part of the sixteenth century some writers such as Lord Berners maintained the dichotomy (Baugh and Cable, 1993). The distinction was also observed in the Authorized version of the Bible (1611): *no doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you (Job)*.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, *ye* occurs four times, and at no time does it occur in a nominative position. Mecaenus, urging the reconciliation of Antony and Caesar, says,

If it might please you, to enforce no further  
The griefs between ye: to forget them quite  
Were to remember that the present need  
Speaks to atone you. (II.ii.106)

When Enobarbus tells Meanus that Octavia is now the wife of Marcus Antonius, Meanus expresses his surprise with what would currently translate as "I beg your pardon": "Pray ye, sir? (II.vi.110). It is also used by Dollabella in a conversation with Cleopatra: "If it might please ye," (V.ii.78). The inconsistent use of *you* and *ye* is clearly illustrated in Enobarbus' address to Pompey:

Sir,  
I never loved you much; but I ha' praised ye,  
When you have well deserved ten times as much  
As I have said you did. (II.vi.77)

Other differences between Elizabethan and current English manifest themselves in the way adjectives were used.

## V. Adjectives

The most important development affecting the adjective since Shakespeare's time seems to be in the area of comparison. By Shakespeare's day, the adjective had already lost all other endings that reflected gender, number and case. However, Shakespeare's use of the comparative and superlative forms of the adjective is quite different from current use.

In modern times, the comparative and superlative are consistently expressed by the endings *-er* and *-est*, or by the adverbs *more* and *most*. Unlike Shakespeare's use of comparatives and superlatives, the choice in today's English of *-er* or *-est* or the adverbs *more* and *most* follows a regular pattern. The endings *-er* and *-est* are added to monosyllabic

adjectives to form the comparative and superlative, respectively. Thus the comparative and superlative forms of the adjective *big* are respectively *bigger* and *biggest*. The same endings are attached to disyllabic adjectives ending in *-y*, *-ow*, *-le*, *-er*, and *-ure*. Thus the comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives *lovely*, *narrow*, *noble*, *clever*, and *mature* are respectively *lovelier - loveliest*, *narrower - narrowest*, *nobler - noblest*, *cleverer - cleverest*, and *maturer - maturest*. Some common disyllabic adjectives can have the comparative and superlative forms either by adding *-er* and *-est*, or by adding the adverbs *more* and *most* before them. The comparative form of the two-syllable adjective *common*, for example, can be either *commoner* or *more common*, and the superlative form can be either *commonest* or *the most common*. Other disyllabic adjectives, ending with suffixes like *-al* as *frugal*, *-ed* as *learned*, *-ful* as *careful*, *-ic* as *poetic*, *-ive* as *active*, and *-ous* as *famous* take *more* and *most*. Adjectives other than those listed above form comparison only with *more* and *most*. The comparative form of *expensive* is *more expensive*, and the superlative is the *most expensive*.

Double comparatives occur in *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>8</sup> When Caesar tells Octavia about Antony's return to Egypt, he mentions the names of the kings Antony has assembled in addition to "a more larger list of scepters" (III.vi.76). Another example of a double comparative is used by Cleopatra in her angry talk with the messenger:

Is he married?  
I cannot hate thee worser than I do,  
If thou again say 'Yes'. (II.v.91)

The same form *worser* is used by Charmian in her talk with the soothsayer: "Our worser thoughts heavens mend!" (I.ii.56)

Periphrastic comparisons occur in *Antony and Cleopatra* with monosyllabic adjectives such as *dear*, *mad*, *sweet*, *great*, *fit*, *narrow*, *weak*, and *noble*. The phrase "more dear" is used by Caesar in his comforting address to his abused sister:

Welcome to Rome;  
Nothing more dear to me (III.vi. 87).

Cleopatra uses the periphrastic comparison "*more mad*" in her response to Antony's fury:

Help me, my women! O, he is more mad  
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly  
Was never so emboss'd. (IV.xiii.3).

The analytical form *more tight* (in the sense of more skillful) rather than *tighter* is used by Antony to refer to Cleopatra:

Thou fumblest, Eros, and my queen's a squire  
More tight at this than thou. (IV.iv.15).

The *-er* inflection is also used with monosyllabic adjectives,<sup>9</sup> as in the soothsayer's conversation with Charmian: "You shall be yet far fairer than you are." (I.ii.14), and in Enobarbus' talk about Cleopatra: "I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment" (I.ii.132).

Periphrastic comparisons with *most* also occur with monosyllabic adjectives.<sup>10</sup> The adverb *most* is used in the sense of *very*. Cleopatra is addressed by Antony as "Most sweet queen" (I.iii.32) in response to her remark that he does not keep an oath. When Lepidus attempts to reconcile the triumvirs, he says "That which combined us was most great, (II.ii.18). When Cleopatra decides to re-employ a messenger whom she had ill-treated before, she reassures him she would reemploy him as he is "Most fit for business" (III.iii.36). Antony complains to Octavia that Caesar

Spoke scantily of me: when perforce he could not  
But pay me terms of honour, cold and sickly  
He vented them; most narrow measure lent me. (III.iv.6)

Octavia's jubilant reply to Antony's suggestion to act as mediator between him and Caesar includes the use of *most* with the monosyllabic *weak*:

The Jove of power make me most weak, most weak,  
Your reconciler! (III.iv.30)

Cleopatra is addressed by Iras as "most dear queen" (III.xi.26); Antony is addressed by Eros as "most noble sir" (III.xi.46), by Octavius Caesar as "most noble Antony" (III.ii.27), and by Mardian again as "most noble Antony" (IV.xiv.30). When he commits suicide, his blood is referred to by Dercetas as "most noble blood" (V.i.26).

The use of *most* with monosyllabic adjectives, however, is inconsistent. On one occasion Cleopatra is addressed by Iras as "most dear queen" (III.xi.26), and on another by Antony as "my dearest Queen" (I.iii.18). Superlatives with *-est* inflections occur with the adjectives *great*, *rough*, and *rude*. Cleopatra, addressing Antony, tells him he's the greatest soldier of the world and yet the greatest liar:

Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,  
Art turn'd the greatest liar. (I.iii.39)

In an exchange with Caesar, she refers to herself as "the greatest":

Be it known, that we, the greatest, are misthought  
For things that others do. (V.ii.177)

The superlative -est form is used by Caesar in praise of Antony:

Thou didst drink  
The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle  
Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign  
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge. (I.v.64)

Sometimes *most* is used as the equivalent of utmost. Thus, when Caesar tells Antony "With most gladness" (II.ii.172), his statement would be understood in modern times as with the utmost gladness.

Among the interesting usages of the adjectives in *Antony and Cleopatra* is the use of a transposed possessive determiner between the adjective and the noun. Thus it is common to see expressions like "Good my lord," for my good lord. This construction is used by Cleopatra in her address to Antony (III.xiii.109) and by Octavia in her address to Caesar (III.vi.55), and by Charmian in her address to Cleopatra: "Good your Highness, patience" (II.v.107). It is also used by Antony after he stabs himself: "Nay, good my fellows" (IV.xiv.134).

Some quantifiers like *all*, *each*, *both*, *every*, *other*, and *none* are sometimes interchanged and used as pronouns. In the soothsayer's conversation with Charmian, *every* is used as pronoun:

If every of your wishes had a womb,  
And fertile every wish, a million. (I.ii.36)

The use of *none* is different from current use. Cleopatra's talk with Antony exemplifies this use:

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,  
Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor (I.iii.36)

Cleopatra also uses *none* as a substitute of a verb, when she decides she does not want to play billiards: "I'll none now" (II.v.9).

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, adjectives are used as adverbs, as shown by Lepidus' comment, "Tis noble spoken" (II.ii.103). Demetrius, expressing



regret over Antony's indifference to the news from Rome, uses the adjective *full* as adverb:

I am full sorry  
That he approves the common liar. (I.i.59)

In current use, Demetrius' regret would have been "I am fully sorry." Like nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, verbs have undergone significant change since *Antony and Cleopatra*.

## VI. Verbs

One of the important differences between Elizabethan and today's English verb usage is the use of the auxiliary *do* in forming interrogative and negative constructions involving main verbs. In present-day English, the auxiliary *do*, or its other forms *does* and *did*, is an indispensable element in forming such constructions. This did not seem to be the case in Elizabethan English, where interrogatives could commonly be formed by placing the main verb before the subject, and negatives could be formed by simply adding *not* after, and sometimes before, the verb.

*Antony and Cleopatra* abounds in examples of interrogatives lacking the auxiliary *do*. When Cleopatra asks Enobarbus about Antony, she says, "Saw you my lord?" (I.ii.73) and when she asks Charmian about him, she uses the same structure, except with one verb – *walk*:

O Charmian,  
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?  
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?  
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!  
Do bravely, horse! for wot'st thou whom thou movest?  
(I.v.23)

Using tactics to prevent Antony from leaving, she asks, "What, says the married woman you may go" (I.iii.20). Her playful question to Mardian has no auxiliary: "Hast thou affections?" (I.v.12). In the same scene, she asks Alexas, "How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?" (I.v.38), and "Met'st thou my posts?" (I.v.62). When she decides to take her own life, she does not want to experience physical pain; she asks the clown:

Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,  
That kills and pains not? (V.ii.243)

And when the clown states that he has it, she asks again. "Rememberest thou any that have died on't?" (248). Antony's inquiry about the details of

his wife Fulvia's death contains no auxiliary: "Where died she?" (I.ii.109), and when he gives orders that Thidias be whipped for having kissed Cleopatra's hand, he wants to make sure the whipping was painful: "Cried he? and begg'd 'a pardon?" (III.xiii.132). On another occasion, when he asks about Pompey's place, he places the main verb before the subject: "Where lies he?" (II.ii.164). Similar interrogatives appear in the speech of other characters. Thus, Enobarbus asks Agrippa, "Spake you of Caesar?" (II.ii.11) and Diomedes, looking for Antony, asks Dercetas, "Lives he?" (IV.xiv. 113). One of the soldiers asks, "Heard you of nothing strange about the streets?" (IV.iii.3). Enobarbus, inquiring about the state of affairs, asks, "How appears the fight?" (III.x.8). In the last scene, after the death of Antony, Enobarbus, Cleopatra, Iras, Eros, and Charmian, Dollabella asks "How goes it here?" (V.ii.324).

There are, however, other interrogatives with *do*, but these seem to be much less frequent than their non-auxiliary counterparts. Some of these occurrences will be illustrated below. Cleopatra wonders why Antony married Fulvia if he did not love her: "Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?" (I.i.41). Eager to know what Octavia looks like, she showers the messenger with many questions involving the auxiliary *do*, "Didst thou behold Octavia?" (III.iii.7), "Didst hear her speak? is she shrill-tongued or low?" (III.iii.12), and reverting to the more common pattern, she asks, "Bear'st thou her face in mind? is't long or round?" (III.iii.29). Antony, addressing Cleopatra, says, "Dost thou hear, lady?" (III.xiii.172) and shortly before he dies, he asks Diomedes about the time Cleopatra sent him, "When did she send thee?" (IV.xiv.118). When Alexas is asked by Cleopatra "How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?" (I.v.38) and "Met'st thou my posts?" (I.v.62), his answer involves a question formed with the auxiliary *do*:

"Ay, madam, twenty several messengers:

Why did you send so thick?" (I.v.63)

The now-regular interrogatives with *do* also appear in Agrippa's question to Caesar, "Who does he accuse?" (III.vi.23), in the collective speech of the soldiers, "How now? How now? Do you hear this?" (IV.iii.18), and in the third soldier's question, "Do you hear, masters? Do you hear?" (IV.iii.19).

*Antony and Cleopatra* also abounds in examples of negative sentences formed without the auxiliary *do*. Sometimes *not* follows the main verb, but there are also instances in which *not* occurs before the verb, as in the exchange between Antony and Octavia in which Antony complains about Caesar's disrespect for him. Octavia's advice for Antony not to listen to rumors involves the use of *not* after the main verbs *believe* and *stomach*:

ANTONY When the best hint was given him, he not took't,  
Or did it from his teeth.  
OCTAVIA O my good lord,  
Believe not all; or, if you must believe,  
Stomach not all. (III.iv.12)

Another dialog, this time between Charmian and Cleopatra, also illustrates the two different ways of forming the negative with main verbs:

CLEOPATRA Where is he?  
CHARMIAN I *did not see* [emphasis added] him since.  
CLEOPATRA See where he is, who's with him, what he does.  
I *did not send* [emphasis added] you: if you find  
him sad,  
Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report  
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return.  
[Exit ALEXAS  
CHARMIAN Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,  
You *do not hold* [emphasis added] the method to  
enforce  
The like from him.  
CLEOPATRA What should I do, I *do not* [emphasis added]?  
CHARMIAN In each thing give him way, cross him nothing.  
CLEOPATRA Thou teachest like a fool: the way to lose him.  
CHARMIAN *Tempt him not* [emphasis added] so too far; I wish,  
forbear:  
In time we hate that which we often fear. (I.iii.12)

When Charmian asks the soothsayer to give her good fortune, his reply is in the non-auxiliary negative, "I make not, but foresee," (I.ii.13) and Alexas' advice to Charmian on the same occasion has no auxiliary either: "Vex not his prescience; be attentive" (I.ii.19). The switching from one negative construction to another may also be illustrated with two different utterances of one proposition. On one occasion, Pompey says, "I know not, Menas, How lesser enmities may give way to greater" (II.i.43), and on another, Caesar says, "I do not know, Mecaenas, ask Agrippa" (II.ii.17).

The use of the negative operator *not* after the verb seems to be typical of the imperative construction. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, all negative

imperatives involving main verbs are formed with no auxiliary but with the use of the negative operator after the verb. The following are a few examples: "Speak not to us" (I.i.55), "Say not so, Agrippa" (II.ii.124), "Read not my blemishes in the world's report" (II.iii.5), "Take heed you fall not" (II.vii.122), "Mock not, Enobarbus" (IV.vi.25), "Do not say so, my lord" (III.vi.62), "Make not your thoughts your prisons" (V.ii.185), "Speak softly, wake her not" (V.ii.316), and "Doubt not, sir" (I.iv.84).

The auxiliary *do*, however, occurs in compound tenses in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where modern English would use the simple tense. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, *do* and its derivatives are used in an auxiliary capacity without giving a separate meaning. In modern English this use would give special emphasis to the main verb. This verb construction can be seen in Antony's defense of himself before Caesar:

You *do* mistake [emphasis added] your business; my brother  
never  
Did urge me in his act: I did inquire it. (II.ii.50)

It also occurs in Lepidus' speech:

When we debate  
Our trivial difference loud, we *do* commit [emphasis added]  
Murder in healing wounds. (II.ii.22)

Forestalling Antony's future, the soothsayer uses a compound tense:

If thou *dost* play [emphasis added] with him at any game,  
Thou art sure to lose. (II.iii.26)

## VII. Verb inflections

Another significant difference marking the use of the verb in Elizabethan English is the third person singular inflection. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the two endings *-eth* and *-s* exist side by side. Today only *-s* has survived. Baugh and Cable (1993) maintain that all through the Middle English period, the *-eth* ending was the regular ending of the third person singular in the whole south and southeastern part of England. This district was the most influential in the formation of the standard speech. The *-eth* ending was universal in Chaucer: *telleth*, *giveth*, *saith*, *doth*, etc. In the fifteenth century, forms with *-s* occasionally appeared, an event which Baugh and Cable find it difficult to account for as "it is not easy to see how the Northern dialects ... could have exerted so important an influence upon the language of London and the south" (p. 241). During the sixteenth century the *-s* endings increase in number, especially in writings that

seem to reflect the colloquial usage. By the end of the sixteenth century forms like *tells*, *gives*, *says* predominate, though in some words, such as *doth* and *hath*, the older usage may have been the more common. Speakers were free to use either form. During the first half of the seventeenth century, Baugh and Cable (1993) argue, the *-s* ending had undoubtedly become universal in the spoken language, even though *-eth* continued to be quite commonly written. They quote Richard Hodges, a writer toward the middle of the seventeenth century, as saying "howsoever wee use to Write thus, *leadeth* it, *maketh* it, *noteth* it, *raketh* it *per-fumeth* it, &c. Yet in our ordinary speech (which is 'best to bee understood) wee say *leads* it, *makes* it, *notes* it, *rakes* it, *perfumes* it." It is altogether probable that during Shakespeare's lifetime *-s* became the usual ending for this part of the verb in the spoken language. (Baugh and Cable, 1993, p.241). Blake (1996) also remarks that the *-eth* ending continued to be used in writing until the seventeenth century, though it was confined to poetry where it could add an extra syllable when needed.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the *-eth* endings occur along with the modern *-s* endings. The *-eth* inflections are evident in Ventidius' words, "He *purposeth* [emphasis added] to Athens" (III.i.35), and in Charmian's speech, "E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus *presageth* [emphasis added] famine" (I.ii.45). The use of the *-eth* ending alongside with the modern *-s* ending is illustrated in Antony's comic description of the crocodile: "it lives [emphasis added] by that which *nourisheth* [emphasis added] it; and the elements once out of it, it *transmigrates* [emphasis added]." (II.vii.40). It can also be seen in Enobarbus' words: "it *pleaseth* [emphasis added] their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it *shows* [emphasis added] to man the tailors of the earth" (I.ii.152).

The verb forms associated with *thou* as subject end in *-est*, whether in the present or the past. The use of *-est* endings with the past tense is illustrated in the following speech by Caesar in praise of Antony:

When thou once  
 Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st  
 Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel  
 Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,  
 Though daintily brought up, with patience more  
 Than savages could suffer: thou didst drink  
 The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle  
 Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign  
 The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;  
 Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,  
 The barks of trees thou browsed'st; on the Alps  
 It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,

Which some did die to look on. (I.iv.68)

The use of this ending in the present simple is shown in Cleopatra's tactical criticism of Antony: "Thou blushest, Antony" (I.i.30), and when he is dying she regretfully addresses him, "Hast thou no care of me?" (IV.xv.60). In a vow of loyalty, Antony swears:

As you shall give the advice. By the fire  
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence  
Thy soldier, servant; making peace or war  
As thou affect'st. (I.iii.71)

And in another expression of love, he says,

Our separation so abides, and flies,  
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,  
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee. (I.iii.105)

The *-est* ending is also used to express progressiveness. When Cleopatra rejects Charmian's advice, she tells her, "Thou teachest like a fool: the way to lose him" (I.iii.10).

Blake (1996) remarks that in 1400 the inflections for the present indicative were *-e* (or *zero*), *-(e)st*, *-(e)th* (or *-s*) for the first, second, and third person singular respectively, and *-en/-eth* for all persons in the plural. The first person soon lost its inflection, and the second person would lose its inflection as the plural *ye/you* was extended to the singular. The inflectional endings in the plural dropped out in the sixteenth century except in some conservative writings (pp.219-20).

The use of the progressive is quite rare in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the present simple is used where the present progressive would be the proper alternative today. The increasing use of the progressive is one of the important developments that the verb system has undergone in later times (Baugh and Cable, 1993). One of the rare occurrences of the progressive is seen in Cleopatra's order to Charmian: "If you find him sad, say I am dancing" (I.iii.4). Elsewhere, the present simple is used in a progressive sense, as in "They cast their caps up and carouse together" (IV.xii.12), where the verbs *cast* and *carouse* are understood to occur in the progressive. On another occasion, Enobarbus uses the present simple *weep*, rather than *are weeping*:

What mean you, sir,  
To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep;  
And I, an ass, am onion-eyed: for shame,

Transform us not to women. (IV.ii.36)

Another difference marking Elizabethan use of the verb is the occurrence of *be* with a past participle where *has* or *has been* would be deemed more appropriate in current times. In the very opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Philo comments on Antony's excessive behavior, saying that Antony "is become the bellows and the fan to cool a gipsy's lust" (I.i.10). In Caesar's camp, a messenger comments, "Antony is come into the field," where the present perfect *has come* would be used today. Similarly, Antony, asking about the schoolmaster, says "is 'a come back?" (III.xi.72).

Some verbs have past and past participle forms different from those used today. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the past of *speak* is *spake*, and the past participle is *spoke* and *spoken*. Today the past of *speak* is *spoke*, and the past participle is *spoken*. Informing Antony of Cleopatra's last words, Mardian says, "The last she *spake* was 'Antony! most noble Antony!'" (IV.xiv.30). A guard describing Charmian's death says, "she stood and *spake*" (V.ii.337). Agrippa's apology to Antony includes *spoke* as a past participle: "Pardon what I have *spoke*," (II.ii. 141), and so does Caesar's reply to Antony's request to speak after Agrippa's speech:

Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd

With what is *spoke* already. (II.ii.144)

There is also one occurrence of the past *drave* rather than *drove* in the messenger's reply to Antony:

Ay. But soon that war had end, and the time's state

Made friends of them, joining their force 'gainst Caesar,

Whose better issue in the war, from Italy,

Upon the first encounter, *drave* [emphasis added] them. (I.ii.

84)

Another difference marking the use of verbs is the occurrence of compound participles. The compound participle construction, which arose in the sixteenth century (Baugh and Cable, 1993), does not seem to occur frequently in Elizabethan English. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, it occurs only twice in the characters' speeches. One such occurrence is depicted in Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra:

I saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street;

And *having lost* [emphasis added] her breath, she spoke, and panted,

That she did make defect perfection,  
And, breathless, power breathe forth. (II.ii.235)

The other occurrence is illustrated in Eros' prosaic comment on Caesar's behavior: "Caesar, having made use of him in the wars 'gainst Pompey, presently denied him rivalry" (III.v.7).

Some of Shakespeare's derivations have survived and others have been dropped out of use in time and derived in different ways. In *Antony and Cleopatra* there are examples of derivations that have not survived, such as *mislake*, *misdoubt*, and *misthought*. The current alternatives to these words are *dislike*, *distrust*, and *misjudge*. Other words in the play have either fallen out of use or undergone a process of semantic change. Some of the words that have dropped out of use include *wot* (know), *anticked*, *burgonet*, *cantle*, *renege*, *methinks*, *wherefore*, *yond*. The semantic change that other words have undergone will be explored below.

### VIII. Semantic features

Many words in *Antony and Cleopatra* no longer mean what they used to mean in the sixteenth century. The semantic change these words have undergone can be described in terms of narrowing, broadening, meaning shift, melioration, and pejoration.

Narrowing, also known as "specialization" (Trask, 1996), is a semantic process in which the meaning of a word becomes narrower in the course of time. An instance of narrowing is illustrated in the word *meat* which Cleopatra utters in her statement, "Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;" (V.ii.49) where *meat* means food. Nowadays, *meat* means a particular kind of food, flesh food, and not food in general. The former meaning of *meat* as *food* can also be inferred from King James version of Genesis: *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat*. Interestingly, the current meaning of *meat* was denoted in *Antony and Cleopatra* by the word *flesh*, as shown in Caesar's praise of Antony:

On the Alps

It is reported thou didst eat some strange flesh,  
Which some did die to look on. (I.iv.68)

Another instance of narrowing is illustrated by the verb *drink* in Cleopatra's fear of defeat and humiliation in Rome. Like its current Egyptian and Turkish counterparts, the verb *drink* denoted, in addition to its other senses, the act of inhaling:



In their thick breaths,  
Rank of gross diet, shall be enclouded,  
And forced to drink their vapour. (V.ii.213)

A third example of narrowing is the word *witch*, whose meaning was a magician of either sex, or magic itself. Like *girl*, which once meant a young person of either sex, the word *witch* is now restricted to females. The word is used by Charmian in her address to the male soothsayer: "I forgive thee for a witch" (I.ii.37), and by Antony in reference to Cleopatra: "The witch shall die" (IV.xii.47). In Antony's wish it simply means magic, "Now, the witch take me if I meant it thus" (IV.ii.37), a meaning that is no longer in use.

The meaning of *purchase* has also been narrowed to its present-day sense. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, it meant *acquire*, but today it means acquiring by paying money in return. The use of *purchase* in the sense of *acquire* is illustrated in Lepidus' defense of Antony:

His faults in him seem as the spots of heaven,  
More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary,  
Rather than purchased. (I.iv.14)

The word *honest* occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra* with a meaning quite broader than that currently associated with it. In the comic exchange between Cleopatra and the eunuch Mardian, the word occurs in the sense of *chaste*:

Cleopatra ...Hast thou affections?  
Mardian Yes, gracious madam.  
Cleopatra Indeed?  
Mardian Not in deed, madam; for I can do nothing  
But what indeed is honest to be done. (I.v.16)

In other parts of the play, the word occurs in the sense of truthfulness and chastity, as shown in the clown's answer to Cleopatra's question about the asp:

CLEOPATRA Remember'st thou any that have died on't?"  
CLOWN Very many, men and women too. I heard of one of them no longer than yesterday: a very honest woman, but something given to lie; as a woman should not do, but in the way of honesty: how she died of the biting of it, what pain she felt: truly, she makes a very good report o'the worm. (V.ii.253)

Another example of narrowed meaning is the word *friend*, which, in addition to the meanings it has today, also meant lover. Caesar says,

The queen  
Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she  
From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend. (III.xii.22).

The current meaning of friend, on the other hand, is denoted in *Antony and Cleopatra* with the word *master*, as in the third soldier's talk, "Do you hear, masters? Do you hear?" (IV.iii.19).

Question words in *Antony and Cleopatra* were used with broader meanings. For example, *what* also meant *who* and *why*, as in Antony's question to the messenger "What are you?" (I.ii.108), and in Cleopatra's unfinished utterance just before she dies, "What should I stay?" (V.ii.309). The relativizer *which* was used for both animate and lifeless entities, as can be inferred from Dollabella's speech:

Caesar, 'tis his schoolmaster:  
An argument that he is pluck'd, when hither  
He sends so poor a pinion off his wing,  
Which had superfluous kings for messengers  
Not many moons gone by. (III.xii.6)

Broadening is another process of semantic change that word meaning undergoes. Sometimes referred to as widening (Wardhaugh, 1977) and generalization (Trask, 1996), the term denotes a process in which a word achieves in time a more general meaning so that it comes to mean everything it used to mean in addition to other denotations. An example of broadening can be seen in the word *opinion* said by Pompey, which meant a view of oneself:

but let us rear  
The higher our opinion, that our stirring  
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck  
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony. (II.i.38)

Another example of broadening is seen in the word *virtue* which used to be associated with men, not women. In Cleopatra's warm reception of Antony, it means manly power:

Cleopatra: Lord of lords!  
O infinite virtue, comest thou smiling from

## The world's great snare uncaught? (IV.viii.18)

Today the word *virtue* applies to both men and women.

Another process of semantic change is known as synecdoche, in which the whole is used to denote the part, and a part used to denote the whole. An example of synecdoche is seen in Antony's request of Eros to help him wear his armor by referring to it as iron: "Eros! mine armour, Eros!" (IV.iv.1)

Pejoration, or degradation, is a process in which the meaning of a word comes to mean something inferior to what it originally meant. An example of pejoration is seen in Antony's affectionate address to Eros as his good "knave":

My good knave Eros, now thy captain is  
Even such a body: here I am Antony:  
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave. (IV.xiv.14)

*My good knave* in the above quotation simply means my good servant. The word *knave* once meant only *boy* (Trask, 1996), but was demoted in modern times as a term of abuse meaning an unprincipled or crafty person, or a man of humble birth. These bad connotations were not part of the meaning of Antony's utterance.

Another example of pejoration can be seen in the word *wench*, which simply meant *girl* as can be inferred from Charmian's talk with the soothsayer: "Then belike my children shall have no names: prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?" (I.ii.34). Now, *wench* also means a wanton woman. This is probably the meaning Agrippa invests on Cleopatra in describing her as "Royal wench" (II.ii.229). The opposite process is melioration, or elevation. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the word *Jack* meant rascal, as in Antony's command, "Take hence this Jack, and whip him" (III.xiii.93). Today *Jack* means a man, a fellow, one who does heavy jobs, but not a rascal.

Another process of meaning change is known as semantic shift. In this process a word completely loses its original meaning and acquires a new one (Crowley, 1997). In the above discussion of narrowing, the word *honest* illustrated how a word can lose some of its meanings in the course of time. The current meaning of *honest*, however, is denoted in *Antony and Cleopatra* with the word *proper*; that is, the Elizabethan word *proper* has undergone a process of semantic shift. When Charmian praises the messenger as "a proper man" (III.iii.37), she means an honest man. *Antony and Cleopatra* teems with similar examples of semantic shift. In Scarus' statement, for example, *ignorance* means stupidity, and *very* means sheer:

The greater cantle of the world is lost  
With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away  
Kingdoms and provinces. (III.x.8)

*Avoid* is used in the sense of *go away*, as when Cleopatra commands the guard, "avoid and leave him" (V.ii.242). *Clip* is used in the sense of *embrace*, as in Caesar's comment in the final speech of the play, in which he refers to Cleopatra and Antony:

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it  
A pair so famous. (V.ii.356)

*Formal* is used in the sense of *ordinary*, as can be inferred from Cleopatra's anxious talk with the messenger,

If not well,  
Thou shouldst come like a Fury crowned with snakes,  
Not like a formal man. (II.v.41)

Another word that means *ordinary* in the play is *modern* whose old meaning is very different from current *modern*:

Say, good Caesar,  
That I some lady trifles have reserved,  
Immoment toys, things of such dignity  
As we greet modern friends withal (V.ii.167)

*Appointment* is used by Antony in the sense of *appearance and equipment*. Talking to Scarus, he says,

They have put forth the haven,  
Where their appointment we may best discover,  
And look on their endeavour. (IV.x.9)

*Approve* is used in the sense of *prove true*. Demetrius regrets that Antony, with his excessive behavior, proves the truth of the rumors circulated about him in Rome:

I am full sorry  
That he approves the common liar, who  
Thus speaks of him at Rome. (I.i.61)

The meaning of *vacancy* as leisure time in *Antony and Cleopatra* is different from current use. This is evident in Caesar's talk about Antony:

If he fill'd  
His vacancy with his voluptuousness,  
Full surfeits, and the dryness of his bones,  
Call on him for't. (I.iv.27)

The word *car* in Antony's phrase "Phoebus' car" has also undergone a process of semantic shift, so that it does not mean chariot anymore:

He has deserved it, were it carbuncled  
Like holy Phoebus' car. (IV.viii.29)

*Present* meant *sudden*, as shown in Agrippa's speech:

Pardon what I have spoke;  
For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,  
By duty ruminated. (II.ii.143)

In the messenger's talk with Antony, the word *stiff* meant *unpleasant*, and the word *extended* meant *seized*:

Labienus--  
This is stiff news--hath, with his Parthian force,  
Extended Asia. (I.ii.92)

Pompey's words illustrate the semantic shift the words *pregnant* and *square* have undergone. Unlike their meanings today, *pregnant* meant obvious while *square* meant quarrel:

Were't not that we stand up against them all,  
'Twere pregnant they should square between themselves.  
(II.i.45)

#### IV. Summary

The language of *Antony and Cleopatra* constitutes a linguistic limbo between Middle English and present-time English. It reflects a blossoming age characterized by vigor, creativity, initiative, and an adventurous spirit to tread courageously into *terra incognita*. The great changes that characterized the Renaissance could be felt in the language of the play, which teems with many clues as to what the language was

like in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The clues give the modern observer an idea about how words were pronounced, inflected, and syntactically arranged. One might think of Elizabethan English as a young and vigorous language in its early adulthood, beginning to grow in unprecedented ways. This is implied in the term Early Modern English which indicates that the language was still in a process of ripening and that it had a long way to go before it reached a state of relative stability and refinement.

Like any living entity going through a process of ripening, Elizabethan English was in a state of flux, characterized by dualities in most linguistic features. By comparing the English of *Antony and Cleopatra* and modern English, one can see that English was far from reaching its zenith at that time. Yet, it is not very difficult to see how the writings of Shakespeare exercised a major influence that affected the course the language was to take in the seventeenth century and after. Shakespeare was free to shape the language to his own purposes. Rather than forcing his thought into ready-made molds dictated by the grammar of his time, he created his own molds to serve the ideas he wanted to express. In so doing, he used adjectives as nouns and adverbs, nouns as verbs, and created expressions that were to survive for centuries later, such as "my salad days," "play fast and loose," "beggars all description." If, as Knowles (1997) remarks, he used the language in a particularly bright way, the credit for that must go to him and not to the language.

Variations could be seen in every aspect of the language. Sounds were still changing, and there is evidence that the Great Vowel Shift was not completely accomplished by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the time the play was written. The word *fear* was pronounced like *fair* and *room* like *Rome*; the falling together of *ir*, *ur*, and *er* was under way but not complete, and the diphthongs [ay] and [aw] may have still been pronounced [i] and [u].

It is often the case in *Antony and Cleopatra* that the same grammatical concept could be denoted with two forms. As shown above, the plural of *eye* could be *eyes* or *eyne*; and *news* could be treated as singular or as plural. Many verbs, such as *speak*, had two past participle forms, *spoke* and *spoken*. The pronouns *you* and *thou* were used interchangeably. The nominative *ye* and the objective *you* were also used indiscriminately. The continuous tenses were used very rarely and were still developing into the way they are currently used. The *-s* ending sometimes followed third person plural. The same ending also appears with the third person singular of the present tense along with the regular ending *-eth*. Adjectives such as *worse* and *worser* exist side by side. Besides, rules of forming the comparative were confused, with forms such as "most dear" and "dearest" existing side by side. Older word orders were still used as

in Cleopatra's talk with the clown, "Take thou no care," "good my fellows!," "good my lord!" The negative was sometimes formed with a simple *not* before the verb, but many times after the verb, especially in the imperative mode, and sometimes with the auxiliary *do*. Interrogative sentences including main verbs were formed by simply inverting the subject-verb position, or by inserting a form of the operator *do*. The use of *do* as an auxiliary verb with main verbs was still being refined: sometimes it was used with the negative and interrogative, and sometimes in affirmative assertions without having any meaning of its own. Question words had several meanings: at times *what* could be used instead of *who* and *why*. Quantifiers such as *every* could be used as pronouns. The personal pronouns *he* and *it* were used to refer to animate entities such as the crocodile and the worm. The possessive *his* was still used for lifeless neuter objects, and the possessive determiners *mine* and *my* were used interchangeably, though *mine* was used more frequently before vowels.

Some words have fallen out of use; others have survived, either retaining their meanings or acquiring new ones in the course of four hundred years. Some words like *wot*, *renege*, and *methink* are no longer used while others have undergone some process of semantic change. The terms broadening, narrowing, melioration, pejoration, and semantic shifts are used to describe various processes of semantic change. The meaning of *virtue*, for example, has broadened so that it now applies to both men and women, and the meaning of *witch* has narrowed so that it now applies to female magicians only. The meaning of *Jack* has been elevated, as it meant rascal in Shakespeare's time, while the word *knave*, which meant male servant, has taken on a pejorative meaning in current times. The word *proper*, which meant honest in *Antony and Cleopatra*, has also undergone a process of semantic shift.

## Notes

1. The symbols used in this study are those used in most standard American textbooks: [p] as in *pit*, [b] in *bit*, [m] in *meat*, [t] in *time*, [d] in *dad*, [n] in *nice*, [k] in *cat*, [g] in *good*, [ŋ] in *sing*, [f] *fat*, [v] *vine*, [s] *see*, [z] *zip*, [θ] in *thin*, [ð] in *the*, [ʃ] in *she* [ʒ] in *measure*, [ç] in *chat*, [ɟ] in *judge*, [l] in *look*, [r] in *red* [y] in *yes*, [w] in *we*, [h] in *happy*, [i] in *beat*, [ɪ] in *bit*, [e] in *bait*, [ɛ] in *bet*, [æ] in *bat*, [u] in *soon*, [ʌ] in *hut*, [o] in *boat*, [ɔ] in *small*, [ɑ] in *father*, [ə] in *sofa*, [aɪ] in *five*, [aʊ] in *house*, [ɔɪ] in *boy*.
2. By the end of the fifteenth century attempts were made to make an orthographic distinction between the two sounds [e:] and [i:]. The closer sound was often spelled with *ee* or *ie* as in *seek* and *piece* while the more open sound was as often spelled *ea* as in *sea* and *clean*. But the practice was not consistently carried out (Baugh and Cable, 1993).
3. The sound [e:] was frequently shortened before alveolars and interdentalals such as *bread*, *breath*, *death*, though the spelling remained the same.
4. The same notion can be seen in *Troilus and Cressida*, when Troilus says:  
Ay, Greek; and that shall be divulged well  
In characters as red as Mars his heart  
Inflamed with Venus: never did young man fancy  
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul. (*Troilus and Cressida*, V.ii)
5. The possessive *it* also occurs in other plays by Shakespeare. In *Hamlet*, for example, Horatio describing the ghost says, "it lifted up it head" (I.ii.216.) and in *King Lear*, the Fool says,  
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,  
That it had it head bit off by it young (I.iv.198).
6. In Middle English, the neuter pronoun was *hit*, *his*, *hit*, and it was pronounced without the initial *h* in unstressed position.
7. The use of *thou* is also retained in the grand style of poetry
8. Double comparatives occur in other plays by Shakespeare. In *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony describes the wound given to Caesar by his close friend Brutus as the "most unkindest cut of all" (II.ii.187). Other occurrences are seen in other plays: "More elder" (*The Merchant of Venice*, V.iv.251), "More better" (*The Tempest*, I.ii.19), "More nearer" (*Hamlet*, II.i.11), "More braver" (*The Tempest*, I.ii.439), "With the most boldest" (*Julius Caesar*, III.i.121), "To some more fitter place" (*Measure for Measure* II.ii.16), "I would have been much more a fresher man" (*Troilus and Cressida*, V.vi.21)
9. Occurrences of the comparative inflection *-er* with adjectives ending in *-ing*, *-ed*, *-id*, *-ain*, *-st*, *-ect* can also be seen in other plays: "Horrider" (*Cymbeline*, IV.ii.331), "Curster" (*The Taming of the Shrew*, III.ii.156), "perfecter" (*Coriolanus*, II.i.91), "certainer" (*Much Ado about Nothing*, V.iii.62). In current use, the analytical forms with *more* would be used.
10. In Shakespeare's plays, the superlative inflection *-est* occurs after *-ent*, *-ing*, *-ed*, *-ect*. Examples include "violentest" (*Coriolanus*, IV.vi.73), "cursedst" (*The Merchant of Venice*, V.ii.46), "lyingest" (*The Taming of the Shrew*, I.ii.25), "perfectest" (*Macbeth*, I.v.2).



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## Abstract

### Lexical, Semantic and Syntactic Aspects of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*: A Diachronic study

*Anthony and Cleopatra*, written by Shakespeare in about 1606, is fascinating in more ways than one. Not only does it capture the charming worlds of Egypt and Rome, the luxurious life in Cleopatra's palace, the strained politics in Rome, the conflict between love and duty, and the tension between the political world in Rome and the love affair of Anthony and Cleopatra: but it also captures the way the English language was in the early seventeenth century, and how it has evolved into the English we speak and write today. Yet, despite this difference, the version of English exhibited in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and the present-day English are traditionally classified as belonging to one linguistic period known as Modern English.

Although the language of *Anthony and Cleopatra* is poetic, mostly iambic pentameter, it can still lend itself to comparison with present-day English in some respects. Further, it can provide clues as to the way some words were pronounced during Shakespeare's time. For example, the word *cement*, which is now two lines, which are written in a regular iambic pentameter:

Let not the piece of virtue which is set  
Betwixt us, as the cement of our love (III.ii. 28)  
(An underlined syllable is a stressed one)

This change of pronunciation of some words is not the only linguistic change that *Anthony and Cleopatra* reveals. The play reveals a version of English with lexical, syntactic, and semantic features that are quite different from present-day English. The differences between present-day English and Early modern English, however, are less dramatic than those between modern English and Middle English, or those between Middle English and old English. By examining the language of the play, the

paper attempts to track down the changes that the English language has undergone over the past four centuries: in terms of lexemes, structures and meaning. While the poetic language of the play is taken into account, a number of lexical, structural, and semantic changes are identified and analyzed.

The paper discusses the neologisms that Shakespeare coined in this play, and identifies the coinages which survived and those which did not. Structural aspects of early Modern English are also discussed as they occur in *Anthony and Cleopatra*. These include the way the negative was used, the use of double comparatives, noun and verb endings, the use of personal pronouns. Other aspects of Early modern English grammar that the paper analyzes include the use of the present simple instead of the present progressive in present-day English. Semantic changes are discussed under the rubrics *narrowing*, *broadening*, *elevation*, *degradation*, and *semantic shifts*. Examples of semantic shifts can be seen in the use of *avoid* in the sense of *go away*, *clip* in the sense of *embrace* and *friend* in the sense of *lover*.

## ملخص

### الجوانب النحوية والدلالية والمفرداتية لمسرحية انطونيو وكليوباترا للكاتب المسرحي وليم شكسبير دراسة في علم اللغة التاريخي المقارن

تشير مسرحية انطونيو وكليوباترا التي كتبها شكسبير للمسرح قرابة عام ١٦١٦ الإبهار لأكثر من سبب فهي لا تكشف فقط عن عالمي مصر وربما القديمين بسحرهما ولا عن طبيعة الحياة الرغدة في قصر كليوباترا بالإسكندرية ولا عن التوترات السياسية السائدة في روما آنذاك ولا عن الصراع الدائر في نفس انطونيو وتمزقه بين عاطفة الحب وولعة بكليوباترا ومسئوليته كقائد حربي وإنما تكشف أيضا عن الحالة التي كانت عليه اللغة الإنجليزية في بداية القرن السابع عشر وكيف تطورت شيئا فشيئا لتصبح ما هي عليه الآن بمفرداتها ونظمها النحوي ودلالاتها التي تختلف كثيرا عن اللغة الإنجليزية المستخدمة في عصر شكسبير ولكن على الرغم من هذا الاختلاف الكبير فإن اللغويين يعتبرون اللغة الإنجليزية في القرن السابع عشر واللغة الإنجليزية في القرن الحادي والعشرين جزءا من حقبة لغوية واحدة تعرف باسم الإنجليزية الحديثة . وعلى الرغم بان اللغة المستخدمة في مسرحية انطونيو وكليوباترا لغة شعيرية ، منظومة في معظمها في البحر العميق وإنما لا تزال مجالا خصبا للمقارنة بينها وبين اللغة الإنجليزية المستخدمة اليوم في عدد من الوجود والأكثر من ذلك إنها تعد وثيقة تاريخية مهمة تكشف لها الطبيعة التي كانت تنطق بها وبعض الكلمات في الفترة التي عاش فيها شكسبير ومن ذلك مثلا كلمة cement التي كانت تشدد في مقطعها الأول خلافا لنطقها الحالي حيث التشديد على المقطع الأخير .

وكذلك تكشف لنا المسرحية عدد من الخصائص النحوية والدلالية والمفرداتية تختلف كثيرا عن الإنجليزية اليوم وان كانت هذه الفروق أضيق بكثير من تلك الموجودة بين الإنجليزية الحديثة والإنجليزية الوسيطة أو الإنجليزية القديمة يتقصى البحث من خلال اللغة المسرحية التغيرات التي مرت بها اللغة الإنجليزية على مدار القرون الأربعة الماضية ولا سيما في الجوانب المفردات ونظم الجمل والدلالات .

تتناول الورقة التغيرات التي نحتها شكسبير في هذه المسرحية وتعين تلك التغيرات التي ظلت تستخدم وتلك التي سقطت من الاستعمال كما يتناول البحث الجوانب النحوية للغة الإنجليزية الحديثة حسب ورودها في مسرحية انطونيو وكليوباترا . تتضمن هذه الجوانب استخدام النفي واستخدام صيغ المقارنة المزدوجة ونهايات الأسماء والأفعال واستخدام الضمائر الشخصية كما يتناول البحث استخدام زمن المضارع البسيط بديلا عن المضارع المستمر المستخدم في إنجليزية اليوم . ويعرض البحث أيضا التغيرات الدلالية من حيث اتساع المعنى أو ضيقه أو تغيره عموما